

Facts About the "Port Arthur Route."

Kansas City is to be congratulated on the recent completion of the "Port Arthur Route" which is now a great railroad system of over twelve hundred (1200) miles.

Effective, Sunday, March 20th, new Passenger Service will be inaugurated between Kansas City, Omaha and Quincy, on the "Northern System," thus opening a new, rich territory to the merchants of Kansas City.

In the near future, double daily train service will be in effect between Kansas City, Omaha and Quincy, affording every facility for handling the immense passenger business that will move on account of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. Mount Mansfield, Ark., a most beautiful summer resort, is located on the summit of the Boston Range of Mountains, and is the highest point between the Allegheny and Rocky Mountains. A magnificent new hotel and cottages have been built. The place abounds in sulphur and soda springs and has other natural advantages that will bring it renown.

The "Port Arthur Route" controls Steamship Lines with regular sailings from Port Arthur to Liverpool, London, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Bremen and Hamburg; also, Tampico, Vera Cruz and Progreso, Mexico. Accommodations for cabin passengers will soon be a feature of the steamship lines, thus affording the only passenger service from the Gulf ports to Europe and Mexico.

At the Southern terminus of the road is building a great city. Every pound of merchandise that has ever been exported or imported through Sabine Pass Harbor has been handled over the docks at PORT ARTHUR, through this commercial gateway is being exported the products and manufactured articles of our Western States and Cities.

The policy of this road is progressive. It runs the only dining car south of Kansas City, and all trains are vestibuled throughout. First class passenger service is maintained to Hot Springs, New Orleans, Houston and Galveston.

PANAMA'S BIG DITCH.

HAS COST A QUARTER OF A BILLION DOLLARS AND IS NOT HALF DONE.

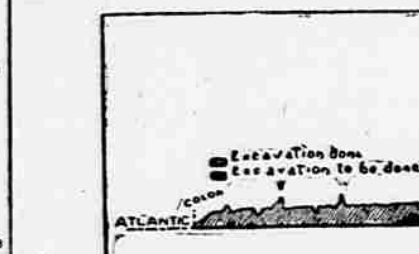
TWO OF THE GREAT CANALS.

3,500 LABORERS AT WORK AND WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

Paris Canal Commission—Will France Complete the Job or Will She Sell Out to Uncle Sam?—Millions Wasted on Old Machinery.

Panama, March 7.—For the past three years 3,000 men have been steadily working here on the Panama canal. There are 2,500 negroes at work here to-day, and a remarkable amount of cutting, dredging and building up of earth works has been accomplished. I have gone over the route of the canal and have taken a number of photographs of the work as it is in March, 1898. This morning I went on the cars out to the Culebra cut and watched 800 men working there, and was told that there were 2,500 employed within three miles of where I stood. The Culebra is, you know, the highest point on the canal route. The

scene was a busy one. Long trains of iron cars loaded with rock and clay moved over the canal tracks, carrying the excavated materials and dumping them on the banks. Immense steel dredges, each as tall as a two story house and ten times as big as the largest thrashing machine, gouged out rocks and gravel, in big iron buckets fastened to endless chains, carried them high into the air and poured them out into cars. Here thirty Jamaica negroes were drilling holes in the rock for immense charges of dynamite, and from away over there at the right came the boom, boom, boom of the explosions of another gang a mile away. At the station of Empress, dredges were scooping up rock and raising it in buckets each of which would hold more than a big barrel. Connected with



some idea of the condition of affairs to-day. There is no doubt but that the work now being done is honest, economical and effective, and also that if the present company had enough money they could complete the canal. As to just how much they need I have not been able to ascertain. I asked the chief of construction to-day what amount he thought was necessary. He shrugged his shoulders and raised his hands and his eyebrows as he replied: "A great sum! A great sum!"

The Canal Route.

But before I further describe the work that is being done now, let me give you the story of the canal in a nutshell. The isthmus of Panama is much like the neck of an hourglass, of which North America and South America are the two globes. It is a wonderfully slender and an exceedingly rough piece of land. It is about as long as the distance between Washington city and Boston via New York, and ranges in width from 15 miles to about thirty miles. Low mountains run irregularly through it. It has plateaus and plains, and near the coast swamps and morasses. Where the canal is being cut the distance from one coast to the other as the crow flies is probably not more than forty miles, but the railroad line is forty-seven miles long, and the route laid out for the Panama canal is still shorter. Some of the mountains of the isthmus are over 1,500 feet high. Along the line of the canal the highest elevation is the Culebra ridge, the point that I visited to-day.

The canal begins at the port of Colon, or, as you may call it, Aspinwall, though Colon is the name used here. Colon is not far from the mouth of the Chagres river, and at the terminus of the Panama railroad. Starting from the mouth of the Chagres, cutting the stream



MODERN HOUSES OF THE DE LESSEPS AT COLON. THE FIRST COST \$50,000 AND THE SECOND \$100,000.

In many places, until at about fourteen miles or more the ground rises irregularly until it reaches the top of the Culebra. There is all told about twelve miles of steep cutting to be done, and thence to the sea the excavation is comparatively easy. This river is much worse rock on any of our railroad lines than that of the Culebra. One difficulty is in taking the Chagres river, and the big excavation is the engineering problems of the canal. De Lesseps' idea was to hold back the Chagres by a big dam and let it out gradually. The Chicago engineers who made the Chicago drainage canal, and who are now in Nicaragua, should really do anything and congress should follow with legislation, there will be a change at once and a local here was feasible.

What the French Have Done.

Everyone has heard of the Panama canal scandals. The truth is worse than anything that has been published. I will, further on, give some stories which I have heard here of the extravagances and frauds of the first companies, when champagne flowed like water and gold was almost as plenty as copper in some parts of the mountains. Within less than ten years they spent more than \$25,000,000, and millions of dollars were wasted in the work. At the same time the work that was done remains, and if the canal is sold to other parties or completed by the French, it will not have to be done again. About twenty miles of the canal is practically completed. The fourteen miles at the eastern end have been somewhat filled up by the Chagres river, but a slight dredging would make this part of the work clear. I visited it last week and saw that nothing had been done for years. Then there is about six or eight miles finished at the Pacific end of the canal, and the dredges now at work there deepening the harbor. This is new work and is of great interest. The present company has just completed a wharf 1,000 feet long at this point,

all ships have to anchor far out in Panama bay, and goods and passengers are brought in by lighters. I am told that when this new harbor is dredged, out reduced rates for through freight will be charged on the railroad, and that all attempts will be made to get ships to land here instead of sailing about Cape Horn or through the Straits of Magellan.

One-third of the Canal Finished.

The French chief of construction who showed me the Culebra cutting to-day told me he considered the canal more than half done. This is probably a rosy view of the work, and I am told by others that one-third would be nearer the proper figure. The old company worked eight years, and during much of this time had an average of 10,000 men in the employ. They spent a quarter of a billion dollars and excavated about sixty-five million cubic yards of earth and rock. Then the bubble burst, and this new company was formed. They have spent I am told, only about \$5,000,000, and have made a big cut in the work for the money. At Culebra the cutting at the deepest point is now about 250 feet, and seventy-five feet this was done by this company. The top of the ditch looks higher as you approach the Culebra, and it is a very fine feat of the engineers. Everything is being painted up for the occasion, as the future of the canal largely depends upon the success of the company. It is a very favorable time to be here, for the French here that is the cut that is being made, and the work, but if not it will probably be given up or sold. The estimates of amount required to complete the work range from the way from \$75,000,000 upward, and it is

probable that \$150,000,000 is somewhere near the proper figure. From what I gather here from a variety of inside sources I believe that the French are tired and sick of the job, and that within a short time they will either drop it or, what is more probable, take in some other nation or corporation outside of France to help them. The director in New York and Chicago who were ready to put up the money to complete it, France has no faith whatever in the Nicaragua canal scheme as a national undertaking on the part of the United States. She believes it is all a matter of political business, and if our present commission should really do anything and congress should follow with legislation, there will be a change at once and a local here was feasible.

Views of an American Engineer.

One of the most sensible talkers as to canal matters among the men I have met here is Mr. R. G. Ward, the civil engineer and roadmaster of the Panama railroad. He is a native of New York, and his views are presented in no problems, financial or mechanical, that cannot be overcome. The trouble is not the machinery they have here, and defective according to modern methods, it will do the work, but in the most expensive way. There have been new inventions since the canal was begun and tens of millions of dollars have been spent for machinery. The Chicago engineers said it was only a question of good machines and good work, and if I believe in that, I should find a big hole and bury all the machinery they are now using, and start anew line of belief. I would be cheaper in the end. We now have dredges that will scoop up rocks such as those quarried for building houses like dirt, and with the right tools work can be done at a low cost.

It is all guesswork, but I believe that \$150,000,000 would be a safe level canal here, and I think a sea level canal would be far better than any lock system. If the French would give up the Panama canal

I should like to see Americans buy it and run it. It is certainly the shortest and I believe, the cheapest, place on the isthmus for a canal, and you can tell just about what it would cost. The French have paid the expenses of the experiments; they have done the work, and I believe there will be a canal here.

Millions of Dollars Rotting Away.

Mr. Ward's remark about the antiquated machinery of the canal is founded on some very bitter facts. Machinery which cost millions upon millions is now lying along the line of the canal, rotting and rusting. There are expensive dredges which cost \$100,000 each, and some of them are now being used to haul lumber. Enough cars wheels to equip a trunk line of railroad are scattered from one end of the isthmus to the other, and the rotten trucks, if their pieces could be put together, would make a train half way across the isthmus. The variety of wasted machinery and rotting property is indescribable. I crumbled up wooden car beds with my fingers, and walked a mile or so on discarded and rusted machinery near the Atlantic mouth of the canal. I saw sheds filled with costly but now comparatively useless engines, and as I looked at the evidences of waste and extravagance all about me, I could not help thinking of the thrifty peasants, or the Woolen Stockings of France, as De Lesseps used to call them, from whom the old company stopped work they had on hand, among other things, 150 floating derricks, 180 towboats and launches, 6,800 iron dumping wagons, 190 miles of railroad track for the canal work, and over 10,000 cars. This, you must remember, was scattered along a distance not much greater than that between New York and Baltimore. They had built beautiful cottages on every hill and slightly place from the Atlantic to the Pacific. There were 6,000 buildings along the line of the canal, and some of these are occupied by negroes to-day.

When Money Flowed Like Water.

Those were the days when money was the cheapest of all things here. Leads were carried across the isthmus on the cars, and men made fortunes in a month. Eiffel, the man who built the big tower, had one contract which netted him \$5,000,000. New York parties, including Henry B. Dredging Company, had contracts amounting to \$20,000,000. The Americans did honest work, but they were not paid. Common engineers took contracts and got rich. I heard to-day of one man who was down on his knees with his employer, a New York contractor, discharged him as worthless. When the contractor came the colon he found this fellow going about with a black valet holding an umbrella over him and appeared to prosper. He asked how he had gotten along, and the man replied: "I am a rich man now. You see, I took a contract to fill a hole along the line of the canal, and was to get \$50,000 for the job. Another man had a contract to cut down a

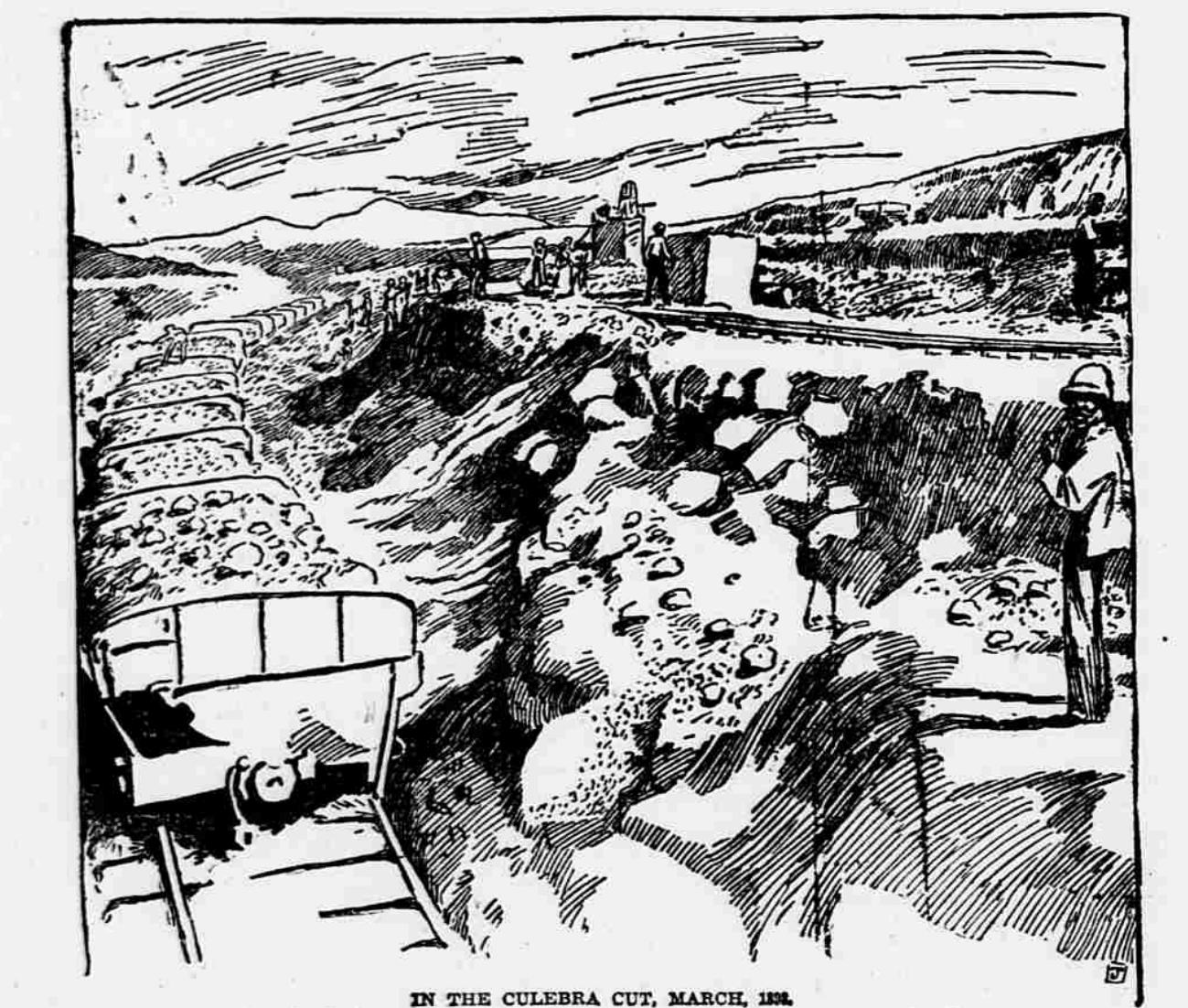
hill for \$150,000, and I charged him \$50,000 to put his hill in my hole. It gave me \$100,000 without spending a cent." Another man measured up a part of the Chagres river in a section of his excavation contract and by a collusion with the French accountants made a fortune. Houses which you could put up at home for \$1,000 were charged for here at \$25,000 and \$50,000. I drove out this afternoon to the Pacific mouth of the canal, past a big frame cottage not as good as many a \$5,000 house in the suburbs of Boston, which I was told cost its owner \$100,000, and as we passed by a resident banker of Panama, who has long done business here and whose guest I was for the time, said: "The same man who built that house constructed this three miles of road on which we are riding, and what do you think it cost?"

The Woolen Stockings of France.

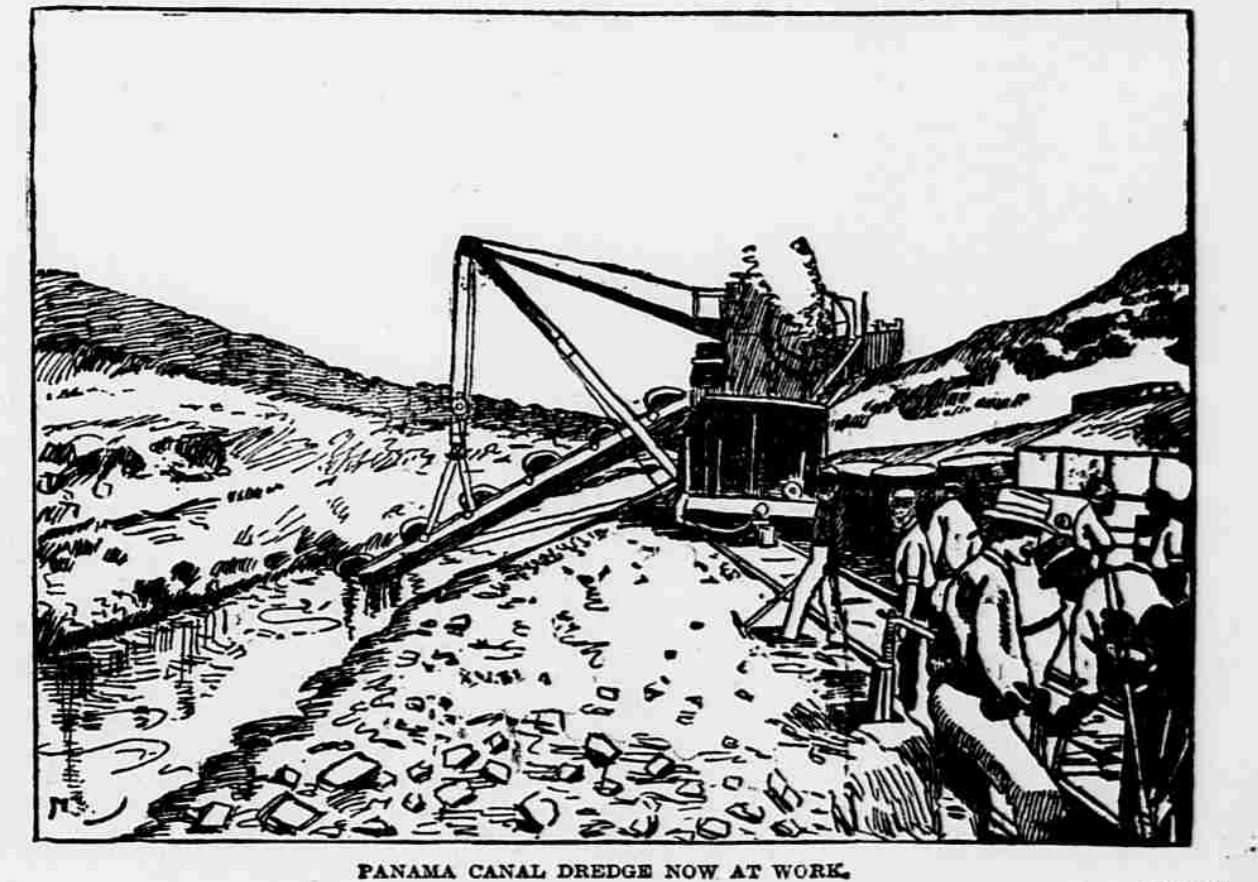
Yes, they were flush times. Flush times among the rich contractors in Paris as well as with the associate contractors here. Shippers of costly machinery were found useless, but more of the same kinds were sent on. Paris shared in the profits. Nearly \$5,000,000 were paid to subsidize the

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IN THE CULEBRA CUT, MARCH, 1898.



PANAMA CANAL DREDGE NOW AT WORK.

French newspapers. The majority in the chamber of deputies was bought with \$5,000,000, and a member of the cabinet got \$50,000 for services rendered. This all came out when the bubble burst and "the woolen stockings," the French peasants and middle classes, awoke to find their savings gone and their canal stock worth nothing. They were the same people who had come to the front and paid at the demands of Germany \$100,000,000 in settlement of the Franco-Prussian war, and now when they had again grown well-to-do many found that they were penniless. It is from these same hard-fisted, economical, patriotic citizens that France will have to get the great part of the money to finish the canal.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.